

***Abronia umbellata* Lam. ssp. *acutalata* (Stand.) Till.**  
C.L. Hitch  
pink sandverbena  
Nyctaginaceae (Four-O'clock Family)

**Status:** State Possibly Extirpated, USFWS Species of Concern  
**Rank:** G4G5T1QSX

**General Description:** Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1964) and Tillett (1967): This sprawling annual can be up to 3¼ feet (1 m) long, with few to several densely glandular, short-hairy branches. The petioles are ½ to 1½ in. (1-4 cm) long. The egg shaped leaf blades are fairly thin but fleshy, and minutely covered with glands and fine short hairs, or sometimes glabrous, ¾ to 2 in. (2-5 cm) long and 1/8 to 1 1/8 in. (0.8-3 cm) wide. The slender, leafless flower stalks are 1 to 1¼ in. (2.5-4.5 cm) long, covered with glands and fine short hairs, and generally erect in fruit. The inflorescence is an umbel consisting of 8-20 reddish-purple flowers. There are 4 to 5 narrowly lanceolate bracts subtending the inflorescences that are ¼ in. (5-6 mm) long. The flower tubes are greenish, ¼ to ½ in. (7-10 mm) long, and covered with glands and short hairs. The expanded parts of the petal (limbs) lie flat, are reddish-purple, and ¼ to 1/8 in. (6-8 mm) in diameter.

**Identification Tips:** *Abronia umbellata* ssp. *acutalata* is the only subspecies of *A. umbellata* likely to be found in Washington. The perianth of *A. umbellata* ssp. *acutalata* is ¼ in. (7-10 mm) long, and the wings of the fruit are often prolonged above the body, whereas the perianth of *A. umbellata* ssp. *umbellata* is mostly ½ in. (12-15 mm) long, and the wings of the fruit are usually not prolonged above the body. *A. umbellata* ssp. *acutalata* can be distinguished from *A. latifolia* (which can occur in the same habitats), by the following: *A. umbellata* ssp. *acutalata* has reddish-purple flowers, and the thin wings of its well developed fruit are as broad or broader than the fruit body, whereas *A. latifolia* has yellow flowers, and its fruit has thick wings that are narrower than the fruit body.

**Phenology:** Collection records in Washington range from July through September. In Oregon plants flower in July through November, usually with a peak in late August and early September.

**Range:** This taxon is found from western Vancouver Island, British Columbia (where recently re-discovered) south along the coast to central California. In Washington it is known from four historical sites in Clallam and Kitsap counties.

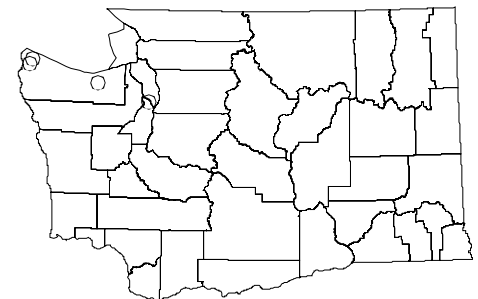
**Habitat:** The four Washington occurrences were at sea level. It may have been associated with American dunegrass (*Elymus mollis*) and coastal sandverbena (*Abronia latifolia*).

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Known distribution of  
*Abronia umbellata*  
in Washington



- Current (1980+)
- Historic (older than 1980)

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Tom Kaye



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**Ecology:** This taxon appears to be adapted to the disturbed habitat of shifting sand (Gamon 1986). Each spring, populations reestablish from seeds that persist in the sand or that are washed into the site (Kaye 2003). Plants are almost always annual. However, some plants can become perennial if in protected habitats (Kaye 2003).

**State Status Comments:** *Abronia umbellata* ssp. *acutalata* appears to be extinct in Washington. It is known from only four historical collections at three different sites in Clallam and Kitsap counties, collected from 1890 to 1950. Extensive yet unsuccessful surveys took place in Island, Jefferson, Clallam, Pacific and Jefferson in 1985 (Gamon 1986).

**Inventory Needs:** Sandy beaches and dune habitats should be systematically surveyed.

**Threats and Management Concerns:** The taxon has apparently been extirpated from Washington.

**Comments:** Recent work by Kaye (2003) suggests that plants of Washington and British Columbia are not genetically or morphologically different from *Abronia umbellata* ssp. *breviflora* (known from southern Oregon to central California). He proposes calling our northern plants *Abronia umbellata* ssp. *breviflora*, but WNHP has not yet adopted this change.

**References:**

- Gamon, John G., E. Alverson and N. Sprague. 1986. Report on the status of *Abronia umbellata* Lam. spp. *acutalata* (Standl.) Tillett. On file with WNHP.
- Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1964. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 2: Salicaceae to Saxifragaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 597 pp.
- Kaye, Thomas. 2003. Conservation strategy for pink sandverbena (*Abronia umbellata* ssp. *breviflora*). Available online at <http://www.appliedeco.org/reports.html#abronia>
- Tillett, S.S. 1967. The maritime species of *Abronia* (Nyctaginaceae). *Brittonia* 19: 229-327.